

Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Program Professional Standards Committee

Final Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 16, 2020 1pm-4pm
Zoom Meeting (COVID-19)

Members Present:

Jennifer Bourne, Director, Clinch Valley Community Action Inc.
Cathy Easter, Executive Director, Safe Harbor
Debbie Evans, Division Chief of the Sexual Assault Center & Domestic Violence Program, City of Alexandria Department of Community & Human Services
Robin Gauthier, Executive Director, Samaritan House
Kandy Hayes, Domestic Violence Program Director, Southside Center for Prevention Inc.
Sheree Hedrick, Executive Director, Hanover Safe Place
Candy Phillips, Executive Director, First Step: A Response to Domestic Violence
Stacy Sheppard, Director of Housing & Human Services, Total Action for Progress
Maria Simonetti, Executive Director, The Collins Center & Child Advocacy Center
Kristina Vadas, Manager of Victims Services, DCJS
Laura Beth Weaver, Executive Director, Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley

Members Present Remotely per 2.2-3708.1

Members Absent:

Linda Ellis-Williams, Director of Programs, YWCA of Central Virginia
Kristi VanAudenhove, Executive Director, VSDVAA

Others Present:

Dione Bassett, Victims Services Grant Program Specialist, DCJS

Welcome & Remarks

The meeting started at 1:07 p.m. with quorum established. Cathy Easter welcomed all members and Dione Bassett facilitated the recording of meeting minutes. Ms. Easter led the meeting with an ice-breaker activity in which each member was asked to share a word that brings them happiness or peace.

Approval of August 2020 Meeting Minutes

Cathy Easter requested the review of the August 2020 meeting minutes. The committee reviewed the minutes as presented. There were no corrections made to the minutes. Maria Simonetti made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Debbie Evans and approved by all members through a roll call vote.

Online Application Review

Prior to the meeting, Tierra Smith disseminated the online application test site and log-in information. The committee reviewed changes to the application and discussed how electronic payment of the application fee will work. The committee discussed the following change to the application: communicate to applicants that an attachment is required for each item in the “List of Attachments.” There were no additional changes proposed. Laura Beth Weaver made a motion to approve the revisions made to the online application, and Maria Simonetti seconded this motion. All members voted for the approval.

Application Process Review

Kristina Vadas reviewed the revised process document with the committee. Members discussed the appeals process and how to determine the appeals subcommittee. One suggestion is to assign a subcommittee for that entire years’ worth of appeals. The group will discuss this further and make decisions on appeals at the next meeting.

Two additional minor edits were made to document.

Kandy Hayes made a motion to approve the document with revisions. Robin Gauthier seconded it and the document was approved.

BREAK

Committee members took a brief break and resumed the meeting at 2:20 p.m.

Discussion of Timeline

Ms. Easter presented the Virginia Professional Standards Committee Draft Timeline and Implementation Plan from October 2019. Ms. Easter facilitated a discussion about updating the timeline because of delays due to the pandemic. The following feedback was provided by the committee:

- Change March 2020 to October 2020 for the online application to be released
- Change May 2020 to February 1, 2021 for application due date
- Change site visits to February-June 2021

The committee asked for an update on the hiring of the Professional Standards Coordinator and part-time consultant position. Ms. Vadas shared that the Commonwealth of Virginia is still under a hiring freeze. Positions must be approved by the Secretary of Public Safety’s office, and there currently is no timeframe on this process. Based on previous approvals it could take approximately a month or more. She confirmed that both positions have been requested for approval.

Ethics Statement

Ms. Jennifer Bourne led a discussion regarding the Value Statement for the Virginia Professional Standards Committee. The committee reviewed the statement and discussed whether there is a need to add a conflict of interest clause. Committee members decided that the current value statement and the Code of Virginia section on the Professional Standards Committee show a commitment to transparency and standards that are survivor-centered, inclusive, and empowering for programs and those impacted by sexual and domestic violence. They determined that no changes are needed.

Closing Remarks

Committee members noted that they enjoyed the *Victims Services News* newsletter provided by DCJS. The meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Summary

Action Items

- DCJS to revise the online application based on feedback provided by the committee
- DCJS to send communication to applicants with the following information:
 - thanking them for their patience; provide an update on the delay in the schedule
 - online application link and password
 - explain that uploaded files are required
 - provide attached document with application questions
 - give information about who to contact with questions and technical assistance
 - make a webinar available in November
- Committee will discuss the appeals process in detail during the next meeting

Decisions/Votes:

- The committee voted to approve the meeting minutes from the last meeting held on August 25, 2020.
- The committee voted to approve revisions made to the online application based on feedback received from members.
- The committee voted to approve revisions made to the application process document.

Next Meeting:

October 21, 2020, 1pm-4pm via Zoom platform. Meeting information to be sent via e-mail.